



2018 Farm Bill Recommendations

Many of California's forests, like forests across the western United States, are unhealthy and at significant risk of high-severity wildfire, insect and disease epidemics, and other threats. This is a serious problem for wildlife and nature, as well as for people who depend on the natural resources and benefits derived from our forests. Additionally, significant wildfires are threatening lives, property, and California's water supply, all while releasing enormous amounts of carbon into the air we breathe.

The California Forest Watershed Alliance (CAFWA) supports increasing the pace and scale of ecologically sound forest restoration practices that reduce risk and promote healthier, more resilient forests. Our diverse coalition believes the 2018 Farm Bill is a timely opportunity to address these national issues of significance. CAFWA's founding members include Association of California Water Agencies, California Farm Bureau Federation, California Forestry Association, Rural County Representatives of California and The Nature Conservancy.

We recommend that the 2018 Farm Bill address the following priorities:

Wildfire

- A comprehensive fire suppression funding fix is critically needed to address the increasing cost of wildfire suppression. The shifting of funds from non-suppression accounts to suppression accounts is hindering the ability of the USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to properly manage federal lands. A comprehensive fix would address the problem of transfers and the bigger problem of the erosion of funding for other programs due to increasing suppression costs.

Financial and Technical Assistance

- At a minimum, maintain mandatory funding and acreage enrollment levels for key conservation programs that support forests. These include:
 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program
 - Conservation Innovation Grants
 - Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- Restore funding levels for Agriculture Conservation Easement Program, to the 2017 level of \$500 million.
- Improve and streamline technical assistance for forestland owners.

Improved Federal Forest Management

- Amend the Good Neighbor Authority to allow states to perform road reconstruction and maintenance as part of their agreements.
- Create authority for an accelerated landscape scale restoration pilot program on National Forest system lands with the following characteristics:
 - Collaboratively designating large landscapes where enabling conditions support restoration at a large scale
 - Includes sideboards that focus work on ecologically-based restoration
 - Requires a full National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review at the landscape level
 - Requires that consultation take place as the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) progresses
 - Allows project implementation without further review provided projects and their impacts are within the scope of the landscape plan analyzed in the NEPA documents; and,
 - Applies Healthy Forest Restoration Act judicial review

Biomass

- Continue to assist farmers and forester landowners with harvesting biomass that can be used for energy or biobased products by maintaining mandatory funding levels for the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP). The transportation grant program should be maintained as part of the BCAP.